Huntington Creek Bridge
Spanning Huntington Creek on State Route 10
Huntington vicinity
Emery County
Utah

HAER No. UT-82

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
HUNTINGTON CREEK BRIDGE

I. INTRODUCTION

Location:	Spanning Huntington Creek on SR-10 in the vicinity of Huntington, Emery County, Utah.
Quadrangle:	Huntington, UT 7.5', 1969
UTM:	503320E 4354010N
Date of Construction:	1941
Present Owner:	Utah Department of Transportation
Present Use:	Vehicular Bridge
Significance:	Huntington Creek Bridge is a worthy example of a long-span concrete cantilevered girder bridge designed by the Utah State Road Commission with an artistic style influenced by the "Art Moderne" movement.
Authors:	Kim A. Hyatt, Architect James R. Christensen, Intern Architect Smith Balle Hyatt Architects Bountiful, Utah. November 1994.
Photographer:	Kim A. Hyatt, Architect Smith Balle Hyatt Architects Bountiful, Utah. November 1994.

II. HISTORY

In the fall of 1877, a small band of Mormon pioneers loaded up their belongings and left their homes in Fairview in Sanpete County, Utah. The group was answering a call by the authorities of the LDS Church, directing the settlement of Castle Valley, which had long been known to be rich in its agricultural prospects. Native American Indians had long used the area for pasturing horses and cattle that they were alleged to have stolen from the white settlers in the western valleys. Early Mormon pioneers had also realized that the area held some potential. While en route to the area that would later become Moab, one party noted that "...the men killed one elk, two deer, one bear, and one mountain lion," and equated this with an "...exceptional grazing and a fine winter range."[1]

This forecast would be proved correct as the county's chief industry eventually became agriculture. This included the cultivation of grains and alfalfa in Castle Valley, and the grazing of cattle and sheep in the high mountains and deserts of the county. Huntington Canyon provided another major boost to the economy as coal mining became the county's second major industry.

The first pioneers travelled east through Spanish Fork Canyon, crossed the Park country, and headed down Soldier Canyon. From the end of the canyon they headed southward, following the general direction of what is now known as State Highway 10, to the north bank of Huntington Creek. Here, they settled and prepared themselves for the coming winter. On the south bank of the creek, across

from the original settlement of 1879, the colonists laid out the townsite of Huntington,[2] named after William Huntington, who had lead the initial exploration of the valley in 1855.[3]

By 1880, Emery County was created, and several small isolated communities, including Huntington, existed within its general boundaries. The first act of the county government was to establish a levy tax and authorize the building of a county road. County resident Orange Seely was instructed to lay out the road. The new road would begin in the southern reaches of the county at Ferron, continue north to the county seat of Castle Dale, and proceed on to Huntington.[4] Within the next three decades this north-south route would be extended north to the county line and further south to the town of Emery.

In 1909, the Utah State Road Commission was organized to oversee the construction and maintenance of state roads, thus creating the state highway system. The commission's first task was the evaluation and, eventually, the annexing of primary county roads into the intrastate highway system. Within one year, this task was completed and county roads were designated as state highways.[5] Emery County saw the change of the old county road into the new State Route 10.

By 1922, this early highway stretched from Price, Utah, on US Highway 50, to Salina, Utah, on US Highway 89. It was crude by today's standards. Built at a time when motorized travel was minimal or nonexistent, the road and its corresponding infrastructure, with its steep grades, inadequate bridges, hazardous

curves, and poor grading, created a serious problem for Emery County. These primitive conditions made it difficult for the farmers, ranchers, and miners of the region to ship their products to market in the western valleys. In an area isolated from railroads, the highway was of extreme importance. Furthermore, as motor traffic increased, many serious accidents were reported. These conditions eventually prompted the State Road Commission to commence with the upgrading of SR-10.

III. THE BRIDGE

Throughout the late thirties and early forties, the Utah State Road Commission began to allocate large sums of money to repair the SR-10. The funds were used to straighten out the dangerous curves, grade, gravel, and oil the old dirt road, and replace several outdated bridges. These bridges included those along the old county sections of the highway over Ferron, Cottonwood, and Huntington creeks. The replacements were deemed necessary when a large piece of machinery that was being used in the construction of the roads fell through the bridge at Ferron Creek, proving the outdated bridges' inability to carry the heavier loads demanded by modern traffic.[6]

The improvements that were to take place in the Huntington area were extensive. Besides replacing the antiquated narrow bridge over Huntington Creek, the project included the elimination of a hill and five treacherous curves, all within a stretch of 1.2 miles. Also included in the project was the rechanneling of

Huntington Creek. The Utah State Highway Commission issued the design for the new bridge on November 1, 1940.[7] According to the Emery County Progress, a local newspaper, the project cost a little more than $50,000 and provided the city with "...a much safer highway [and] ...a more attractive approach into Huntington from the north, as it will pass through a more thickly wooded section along the river on its wide sweep into town."[8]

Construction began on the Huntington Creek bridge early in 1941. The bridge, designed by an engineer noted only as "C.G.W." on the original drawings produced by the Utah State Road Commission, was to span a southeasterly segment of Huntington Creek.[9] The construction was contracted out to Reynolds-Ely Construction Company of Springville, Utah.[10]

The Huntington Creek Bridge supports a 26-foot-wide travelling deck which provides enough area for two-way highway traffic. It is supported by a three-span structure 123 feet long. The large, center span over the channel is 60-foot-long. The designer used a cast-in-place cantilevered concrete deck girder system to support the loads that act upon the structure. By using this type of system, the need for a central support was eliminated. The concrete deck structure, which carries a bituminous surface, incorporates the use of steel-reinforced T-beams that are supported on a series of roller expansion joints. The joints rest atop concrete piers and channel abutments.

The visual interest of the bridge is enhanced by application of the stepped characteristics of an Art Moderne design to the concrete structure. The arched T-beams connect to ornate stepped concrete piers and abutments. The upper concrete guard rails and ends sport slotted cut-outs and minimal relief.

The bridge construction was completed in the fall of 1941. Over 520 cubic yards of concrete, reinforced by 93,380 pounds of steel rods, spanned the new channel of Huntington Creek and provided Huntington with its new northerly approach along State Route 10.[11]

Huntington Creek bridge has remained unchanged since its construction in 1941. Structurally, it shows little sign of decay except for an area of heavy damage to the northwest end piece. The only alteration that has occurred is the addition of steel safety railings to the end sections of the concrete railings to extend the approach to the bridge.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE AND FUTURE

In a survey conducted for the Utah State Road Commission, Clayton Fraser identified the bridge as an "...excellent example of USRC concrete girder design."[12] Fraser also noted that the bridge uses detailing that is shared with few Utah bridges built during this time. Yet, the structure, though still in use, has been rated as structurally deficient and is scheduled for replacement. This is partly due to the

increased demand on SR-10 that is anticipated for the future, since the highway is one of the most direct routes to the recreation areas of southern Utah.

V. PROJECT INFORMATION

This Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) recording project was requested by the Utah State Preservation Office. Kim A. Hyatt, Architect, with the assistance of James R. Christensen, was responsible for researching and writing the history for Huntington Creek Bridge in Emery County, Utah. This report was prepared during autumn of 1994.

VI. ENDNOTES

1. "Historical Sketch of Emery County," Emery County Progress, 26 May 1939.

2. History of the County Archives of Utah: Emery County No. 8, Ogden, Utah: Utah History Records Survey; March 1941; p. 10-11.

3. Ibid. p. 6.

4. Ibid. p. 18-19.

5. Knowlton, Ezra C.; History of Highway Development in Utah; (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah State Road Commission, 1967); p. 135-passim.

6. "Oiling of Highway 10 Thru County to be Completed Soon," Emery County Progress, 4 July 1941.

7. Negative of Original Construction Drawings, "Huntington Creek Bridge," (Salt Lake City, Utah: Department of Transportation).

8. "Concrete Being Poured for New Huntington," Emery County Progress, 6 June 1941.

9. Negative of Original Construction Drawings, "Huntington Creek Bridge," (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Department of Transportation).

10. Huntington Creek Bridge, Structural Inventory and Appraisal Sheet, National Bridge Inventory. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Department of Transportation).

11. Negatives of Original Construction Drawings, "Huntington Creek Bridge," (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Department of Transportation).

12. Fraser, Clayton; Huntington Creek Bridge (No. OD-457-01). Utah Historic Bridge Inventory. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Department of Transportation.)

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Knowlton, Ezra C.; History of Highway Development in Utah: (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah State Road Commission, 1967).

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B. NEWSPAPERS

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Emery County Progress, 6 June 1941, "Concrete Being Poured for New Huntington Bridge."

Emery County Progress, 2 January 1941, "Company Rushing Ferron-Emery Road Job."

Emery County Progress, 25 May 1939, "Historical Sketch of Emery County."

C. MISCELLANEOUS

Fraser, Clayton; Huntington Creek Bridge (No. OD-458-01), Utah Historical Bridge Inventory. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Department of Transportation, n.d.

C. MISC. CONT.

Huntington Creek Bridge (Structure No. OD-458-01), Structural Inventory and Appraisal Sheet, National Bridge Inventory. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Department of Transportation, 1-27-92.

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